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ABSTRACT

This report on Idaho's grant programs for reading improvement pinpoints two programs, the General Reading Improvement Program and the Reading Improvement with Phonics Program. The report states that the first program makes funds available to support kindergarten through sixth grade "reading recovery" or other locally developed methods which increase reading skills for students. The report explains that the second program uses its funds to support phonics and skills-based inservice instruction as critical components of reading instruction as well as sustained, long-term staff development; several examples of possible uses are provided. The report then presents background information about the reading improvement programs passage through the Idaho State Legislature and funding and grant expenditures. It concludes with a graph representing ITBS reading scores reinforcing program accountability. (NKA)

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Reading Improvement Grants

Bureau of Instruction
Tom C. Farley, Chief

REPORT ON THE READING IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROGRAMS

Critical Components

The **General Reading Improvement** funds are intended to support kindergarten through sixth grade reading recovery or other locally developed programs which increase reading skills for students.

The **Reading Improvement with Phonics** funds are intended to support phonics and skills-based in-service instruction as critical components of reading instruction as well as sustained, long-term staff development. The following are examples of possible uses of reading with phonics teacher training funds (Not intended to limit options, districts may select alternatives consistent with stated criteria.):

Train staff to incorporate phonics into reading instruction;
Provide release time for school-time staff development for phonics teacher training;
Provide stipends for mentor teachers to assist beginning or less-experienced teachers to teach reading with phonics;
Train and/or provide stipends for in-service consultants/facilitators to teach reading with phonics;
Train in-service facilitators using "train-the-trainer" models to teach reading with phonics;
Purchase teacher-requested materials to support in-service training related to teaching reading with phonics;
Train reading recovery teachers to incorporate phonics into their instruction;

Purchase student materials which provide reading with phonics instruction.

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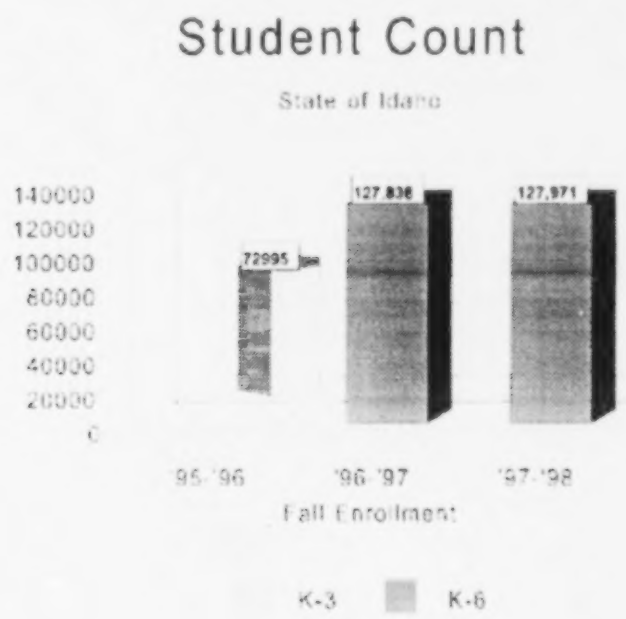
Background

The 1998 Idaho State Legislature allocated $1,000,000 to improve reading instruction for use as follows: $500,000 for reading instruction training for kindergarten through sixth grade teachers which incorporates phonics, and $500,000 to support overall reading skills development of students in grades kindergarten through six. Allocated on a per-pupil basis as determined by each district's kindergarten through sixth grade enrollment as of September 25, 1998, funding for each grant provides approximately $3.91 per pupil for reading with phonics teacher training and an additional $3.91 per pupil ($7.82 total per pupil) for overall reading skills development programs. (See the attached 1998-99 Estimated Reading Distribution sheet.)



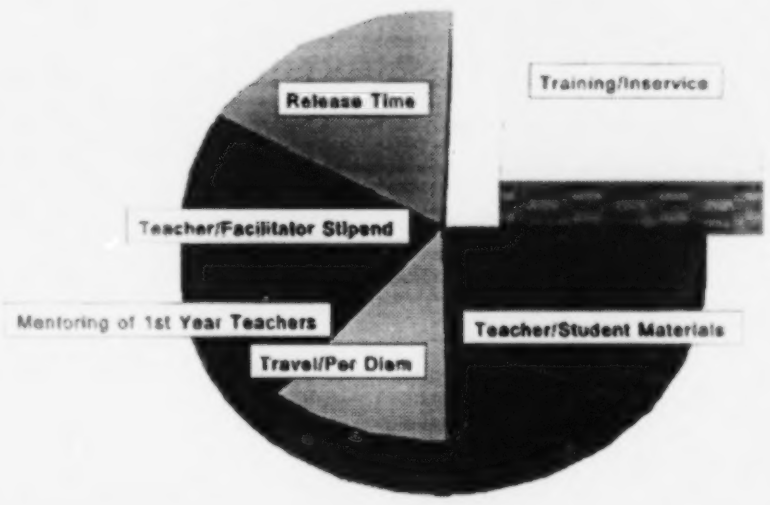
Funding

The State Department of Education has established the following: criteria for school districts to receive K-6 Reading Improvement grant dollars, a pre- and post-evaluation process; and a committee to review grant applications, oversee the program process, as well as provide requested technical assistance. Although many districts receive approval of their applications immediately, the committee requires some districts to rewrite or edit applications in order to meet the prescribed criteria. In addition, the committee contacts all school districts who do not apply to remind them of the opportunity to receive funds. Ultimately, 109 school districts applied for and received 1997-98 Reading Improvement Grant monies. Monies not requested by districts are reallocated to other districts.

Expenditures

The 1997-98 Reading Improvement evaluation forms submitted to the State Department of Education verify the following: districts' ITBS reading scores are improving, primary teachers are receiving training in reading instruction; and districts have increased parental involvement in the reading process.

Individual districts have also used the allocations to purchase such materials to support staff development related to reading as phonetic readers, reading manipulatives, and books. In addition, some have used allocations to mentor first year teachers. (See the attached



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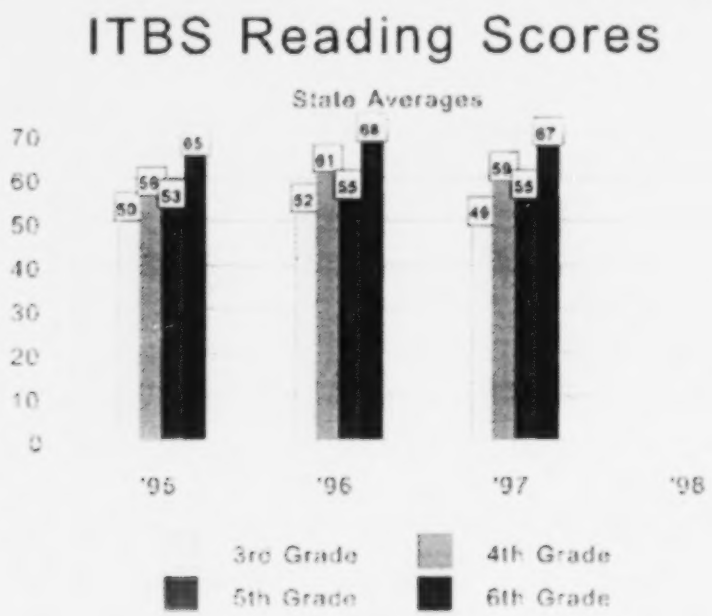
(See the attached
1997-98 K-6
Reading
Improvement Grant
Expenditures.)

Program Accountability

School districts receiving Reading Improvement grant allocations must submit applications which specify how the intent of the legislative language will be met.



Districts are encouraged to use test results as one basis for developing reading curricula that improves gains in student test scores.

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